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CAPITALISM BY DEMOCRATIC DESIGN IN THE POST-LENINIST UKRAINE: THE FAILURE OF THE LIBERAL TRANSFORMATION PROJECT?

The article aims at analyzing the constellation of domestic and international factors that have led Ukrainian transformation efforts to standstill and produced long-term deteriorating outcomes for all spheres of society and major segments of population. The paper also questions the validity of background assumptions of "transitology" and attempts to evaluate their relevance to the analysis of post-Leninist Ukraine socio-political realities. Research strategy employed in the paper seeks to combine findings of the world system perspective and state-centered approach as well as to invoke classical social and political theory tradition for the analysis of the post-Leninist socio-political transformation.

In analyzing Ukraine's prospects of "integration into the world community" and "transition to democracy and market" scholars and policy-makers have often tended to neglect the complex interplay of domestic and international factors influencing these processes and therefore overlooking the vicious circle in which the post-Leninist societies have found themselves. Successful integration of the post-Leninist regimes into global world system is considered to be a natural outcome of rapid transition to democracy and market but the very transition needs to be boosted by already achieved integration into the "world community".

President Kuchma has recently presented a paradigm example of misunderstanding coupled with intentional misrepresentation of the realities of world system workings, while talking about Ukraine's prospects of integration into Europe. In one of his recent interviews Mr. Kuchma has called Ukraine a "young European state" [1]. That territory of Ukraine lies in Europe is well known and undeniable fact of physical geography. Unfortunately that does not automatically make Ukraine "European state". The real question is whether Ukraine as political community meets criteria required for the integration into the Europe perceived in cultural, economic, and political terms as a crucial part of world system core.

The world system approach sought to identify "the social system in which capitalism had grown

as a single social system and to study that system as a totality. ...The single social system Wallerstein identified was the capitalist world economy. It was not the loose collection of capitalist nation-states discussed by previous authors, but an economic entity..." [2]. According to Wallerstein, the world system consists of core formed by the developed capitalist states which includes Western Europe, North America and Japan, periphery which can be defined as underdeveloped areas outside the core exploited by the latter, and the semi-periphery - countries "that are neither among the most advanced nor the clearly peripheral" [3]. Semi-peripheral societies - countries like Brazil or South Africa - are engaged into the struggle to upgrade their position within world system to core status. Wallerstein's analysis of the singularity of Russian empire economic development and modernization concluded that Russia with its numerous dependent areas - including Ukraine among many others - "became a kind of "world economy" of its own... ..Neither highly developed nor peripheralized, its strong state and relative economic autonomy allowed it to enter the world system as a semi-periphery and, eventually, to challenge capitalist system itself" [4]. The former Soviet Union was capable of establishing the "world system of socialism" based upon organizational and ideological principles completely opposite to

those of the global capitalism. Thus, the collapse of the Leninist system has initially left Ukraine outside the world system regardless of its role as the founding member of UN. Preservation of the initial status of newly independent Ukraine as an outsider was undesirable for elites and masses because of its clear economic, political and ideological disadvantages and discomforts rooted in the social memory of Soviet practices and experiences of self-exclusion and manifested by more contemporary examples of countries like Iraq, Minhma and North Korea. Though reluctantly and inconsistently the ideological choice has been made in favor of joining the West or in other words developed world of the capitalism. But there is a wide gap between articulation of ideological priorities, policy statements, real policy decisions, and, more importantly, decisions' implementation.

The core of the modern capitalist system has enjoyed remarkable stability - since its formation approximately one hundred years ago it has seen only one successfully accomplished attempt to join the club of the few chosen - Japan. In this respect it is highly significant that Japan's case has routinely been referred to as a miracle.

During first years of Ukrainian independence the rejection of the legacies of the Soviet past and the desire to join the civilized world - post-Soviet rhetorical substitute for the world capitalist system core - were dominant attitudes at the level of personal dispositions and important component of policy-makers vocabulary. Nevertheless, making a bid for the membership in a core was obviously unrealistic task given the state of domestic affairs and international situation but even obtaining the status of periphery or semi-periphery within the world system requires successful handling of developmental/transformation task and favorable external conditions since country's integration with a world system is possible only through existing international institutions usually dominated by system's core. Obviously that the issues of internal development - interaction of the state, political society, civil society, economy and sociocultural orientations are of critical significance for the political and economic integration into the world of advanced capitalist democracies.

Abortive Development of the Civil Society in Ukraine

Ukraine is experiencing multi-dimensional transformation which involves different forms of interaction amidst major societal spheres - state, political society, civil society, political culture, and economy. For some Ukrainian social science the solution of the problems emerging in the course of transformation - establishment of political, economic and social institutions of modern mass society and *creation* of modern society's system of normative orientations lies in the sphere of civil society perceived as a distinct, separate entity of Platonic ideas bent. Though ill-defined, the notion of civil society has become a buzzword for Ukrainian scholars.

For instance, according to Kyiv based sociologist Yevhen Holovakha the main contradiction of the Ukrainian societal development "is a conflict between obsolete totalitarian structures of administration and civil society" [5]. At first glance this approach seems to be congruent with Dahrendorf's idea of "civil society as a key" to the understanding of the revolutions of 1989 and subsequent events [6]. But it is questionable whether Ukraine has developed network of institutions and corresponding norms, values, and attitudes, generally "habits of heart" (R. Bellah) that constitute civil society. Moreover, anti-totalitarian movements that emerged in the totalitarian societies of the Leninist type did not automatically become liberal-democratic. As Bruce Parrot has pointed out "it is important to inquire whether all the activists who tenaciously championed the concept of civil society as a source of resistance to communism have been capable of making a postcommunist transition to tolerance and cooperation with groups whose central values and concerns differ from their own. Put differently, not all dissidents and anticommunist groups were liberals" [7]. Soviet anti-totalitarian movements often were acting well within the boundaries set up by polarizing discourse of Leninism. The same pattern of the birth and dissolution of the civil society has been thoroughly discussed by Korbonski in his analysis of the Polish case [8]. Mesmerized by the

attractive formula "civil society against the state"

- coined by Andrew Arato to conceptualize events taking place in a totally different setting
- Ukrainian social scientists have reduced the role of another important institution - the state
- to the role of main hindrance to the self-regulating evolution of civil society and market order. Such account is obviously self-contradictory and thus false - it is assigning to the state a great autonomy from the society as far as its reluctance to embark on reforms is concerned and simultaneously it is denying state's autonomy interpreting it as an "executive committee" - in terms of orthodox Marxism - of powerful corporate and regional interest groups. This Manichean approach that mythologizes both the state and civil society attributing to them characteristics of absolute evil and absolute good respectively fails to grasp the analytical, not ontological, distinctiveness of these spheres and their mutual penetration - the condition necessary for modern liberal democracy in general and civil society in particular. It also falls short in understanding the historical dynamics of the civil society and its roots in the West. Perhaps it is more productive to think of Ukrainian so-called national-democratic "struggle for recognition" - in terms of Axel Honneth - as a resistance movement rather than the institute of proto-civil society. The relationship between state and (civil) society is never simple, hence firstly "there is no single locus of great refusal..." [9] and secondly, there is nothing *a priori* "good" about civil society; every individual case has to be analyzed in its own terms. In a light of Foucault's notion of governmentality "the practices of government are... multifarious and concern many kind of people..., so that there are several forms of government among which the prince's [external] relation to his state is only one particular mode..." [10]. Thus state and society mutually presuppose each other's existence and reflect each other's character.

Moreover, if Brezhnev's rule created bourgeois civil society of nineteenth century type so vividly described by Marx - within routinized Leninist political system [11], the Leninist extinction removed all constraints from it

transforming the society as a whole into a loose association of individuals where each person "acts simply as a *private individual* (italics original), treats other man as means, degrades himself to the role of a mere mean, and becomes the plaything of alien powers" [12].

As Axel Honneth's study has convincingly shown "the normative idea of a just society is empirically confirmed by historical struggles for recognition" [13] and requires legally institutionalized relations of universal respect for autonomy and dignity of persons as well as networks of organic solidarity and shared values. Ralf Dahrendorf in more sociologically oriented interpretation of this thesis emphasized the crucial importance of the public virtues which commit individuals to getting along with others as necessary condition for the existence of civil society and democracy [14]. It is more realistic to see Ukrainian society as dominated by private values at the expense of public ones. As Ken Jowitt has bluntly put it "in a curious, unintended, and highly consequential way, Leninist rule reinforced many of the most salient features of traditional culture throughout Eastern Europe (the Soviet Union and elsewhere). ...Leninist experience in Eastern Europe (and elsewhere) reinforced the exclusive distinction and dichotomic antagonism between official and private realms. ...Regime-coerced political activity (not participation) sustained and heightened the population's psychological and political estrangement. At the same time, the party could not be everywhere. So Leninist parties traded de facto privatization in nonpriority areas for active Party control and penetration of priority areas. This became particular true during the Brezhnev period, when the private egoism - *personalism* (italics in original) not individualism - became the major sociocultural reality" [15]. In other words, "civil society is more than economic and legal sociology; it is *political culture* (italics added)" [16]. Ukrainian proto-civil society activities sought to destroy the Soviet rule but apart from ideal interests of national and civil liberation as well as cultural revival - ideas shared mostly by intellectuals - the masses' attitudes were shaped by primitive-rational calculation of material self-interest.

Regime change and independence were conceived as means of improving Ukrainians welfare. The unexpected outcome was a transformation of just emerged public into masses - "rational" calculation of egoistic self-interest based on assumption of unequal economic exchange with a "Moscow Centre" which can be altered only through achieving political independence and economic autarky turned out to be a new version of old anthropological concept of "limited good" [17] typical for traditional peasant societies.

From the point of view of social sciences epistemology this desperate search for civil society, liberal orientations, democratic institutions, constituency for reform has reflected Western scholarly community of experts on Leninist/post-Leninist societies strive to make its subject-matter legitimate and intelligible through the application of common political science vocabulary and thus underline validity of their scientific claims in eyes of those scholars who deal with more recognizable realities of liberal regimes [18]. In contemporary Ukraine the universal solidarity, sphere of fellow-feeling or *Gesellschaft* as a *Gemeinschaft* [19] as necessary prerequisite of civil society is substituted by "ghetto" political culture when any political involvement means "trouble" [20] and Hobbesian principle of force and fraud. They remain to be dominant type of Ukrainian society discourse. Another critically important point for the civil society emergence is the presence of Western type citizenry - phenomenon totally foreign to Ukraine's past and present where significant segments of population continue to define themselves in terms of Soviet "civic" identity.

The Dynamic of Political Society and State

Leninist legacy of neopatrimonial structure of domination continues to shape the mode of Ukrainian state and political society developments. That Ukrainian polity is deprived of major Weberian characteristics of modern state has become a common place in the discussion of Ukrainian politics. The adoption of the constitution with a strong flavor of the

French fifth republic under the circumstances of complete absence of the French democratic tradition could create only short-lasting impression of decisive breakthrough in terms of the establishing legal framework for state building and political society construction.

Political society in Ukraine remains fragmented and unsteady making Ukrainian political elite a disunited one. Ken Jowitt provided - compelling as usual - empirical evidence for this argument when he wrote soon after the institutional extinction of Leninism: "most opposition elites in Eastern Europe had minimal insulation from the intrusive punitive presence of their Leninist adversaries, minimal familiarity with one another and "politics as vocation", and minimal success in bonding with a politically loyal social constituency. Only Poland, over almost two decades, did a counterelite enjoy a Yenan-like protective/interactive experience; one that produced a contentious, but mutually tolerant and intelligible, elite that cohered, and even in its current divided and divisive state offers Poland something more important than either marketization or civil society: an "established elite". An "established elite" is one that recognizes the legitimate places of all its members in the polity despite genuine and deeply felt party, policy, and ideological differences; has worked out civil and practical modes of interaction; and can identify and organize a sociopolitical constituency in a regular manner" [21]. The absence of established elites has made impossible the development of political parties capable of mediating societal interests as well as the formulation and implementation of public policies through the winning the majority in legislature.

Transitologists often take for granted a reformist character of ruling post-Leninist establishment. This raises the problem of establishing more or less testable criteria for determining "reformist" orientation of the given regime's long-term policy goals.

As a distinguished student of modern organizations Amitai Etzioni teaches us "the researcher will define as the *real goals* (italics in original) of the organization those future states toward which a majority of the organization's

means and the major organizational commitments of the participants are directed, and which, in cases of conflict with goals which are *stated* (italics in original) but command few resources, have clear priority. *Sometimes establishing intimate contact with key participants allows the researcher to determine how aware informants are of any discrepancy between real and stated goals. Generally, however, it is unwise to depend entirely on interviews for information on an organization's real goals. An examination of resources and direction of effort is often a necessary complementary research method for obtaining satisfactory results* (italics added)" [22]. The application of this criteria definitely rules out any claim about the reformist nature of Ukrainian ruling establishment policy orientation. It also reveals the total irrelevance of claims defining Kuchma's present path as "pursuit of reform in tacit alliance with important industrial and entrepreneurial interests" [23], the statement supported only by uncritically selected reference to mythical improvement of macroeconomic indicators [24].

Impersonal practices and norms of modern rational-legal state have been greatly influenced by the experience of ascetic Protestantism because Protestant "sect opposes the charisma of office and insists upon "direct democratic administration" by the congregation and upon treating the clerical officials as servants of congregation" [25]. Ukrainian state formation has so far born a great resemblance to the absolutist Europe's mode of state making as organized crime [26]. As Ken Jowitt has spelled it out "it is not enough to point out that most citizens in liberal capitalist democracies (certainly in the United States) themselves fail to vote and are poorly informed about issues and basic premises of democracy. The institutional framework, the practice and habits of elites, and the sociocultural constitutions in these countries assign critically different meaning to events in Western democracies and Eastern European countries" [27]. New institutions of Ukrainian state and political society attempt to recapitulate Western liberal democratic patterns of political

organization and policy choices, but the resemblance of structures does not automatically lead to the similarity of values and patterns of behavior let alone institutions' legitimacy. This pattern of activities is far from Weberian procedural rationality of methodical acquisition of economic and political resources.

Moreover, in a light of Weber's distinction between feudalism and patrimonialism it is more productive to think of Ukrainian state in terms of patrimonial polity: "we shall speak of a *patrimonial state* (italics original) when the prince organizes his political power over extrapatrimonial areas and political subjects... just like the exercise of his patriarchal power... The establishment of a "political" domination... implies an affiliation of authority regulations which differ only in degree and content, not structure" [28]. This arrangement, contrary to ideal-typically defined structures of feudalism rests upon the "benefice" which is "a life long, not a hereditary, remuneration for its holder in exchange for his real or presumed services; remuneration is an attribute of the office, not of the incumbent" [29]. No doubt that Ukrainian state's capacity for autonomous action is experiencing institutional constraints, especially in comparison with its Soviet predecessor but no less important is the absence of psychological *determination* to undertake an independent action. The absence of such a determination correlates with the value-normative disorientation of policy-makers, caused by the general anomie in Durkheimian sense [30]. Despite the deep crisis the state has managed to preserve its autonomy - quite different from the autonomy of democratic state - vis-a-vis society through the mechanism of social production of indifference so brilliantly described by Michael Herzfeld [31].

The success of radical reforms and developmental project in general rests upon the combination of activities of developmental state with an exceptionally high degree of state and public actors interaction. Among features developmental state must possess are the following: "organizational capacity, state autonomy and power vis-a-vis dominant interests, and the state's interest in seeking

development rather static exploitation economy and society" [32]. Developmental state policies long term effectiveness and efficiency can only be assured with public actors participation - through institutions of civil and political society - in defining and implementing government's agenda. Revival and reinforcement of patrimonial structures of domination in contemporary Ukraine have reduced democratic procedures to mere electoralism deprived of social and economic content. In a line perfectly coherent with patrimonial polity norms state institutions and resources are constantly employed by incumbent "masters" - under Kuchma administration this has become a routine practice - for ensuring victory in "democratic" elections and automatically providing the regime with legitimacy, especially on a world stage.

Conclusion

Presented above picture of Ukrainian society under the stress of transformation appears to be rather bleak. It is obvious that optimistic view of Ukraine as a European country that has decisively chosen a path to democracy and market represents either Utopian escape from reality or intentional distortion of it by incumbent establishment for pragmatic purposes of collective consciousness manipulation.

It would be extremely unrealistic to expect "great transformation" (K. Polanyi) of Ukrainian society to happen in a relatively short time span. Ukraine can hope only for peripheral status within world system and it may take decades to obtain this status given the current state of domestic affairs. The situation is worsening by the lack of psychological readiness of population and ruling establishment to define Ukraine's identity as a periphery of more advanced world system core but this is the only relevant and possible goal Ukraine may reach in a feasible future. The only alternative Ukraine can choose is self-exclusion from the world system and defiance of the norms established by the core but this is the least preferable and advantageous strategy as North Korean and Iraqi examples demonstrate. Moreover, the capitalist core has developed new sophisticated variants of the old

stick and carrot policy to deal with "outlaws" on a world stage - they can expect oxygen and asphyxiation strategies applied to them and therefore face full exclusion from the world system with all logical consequences of such decision.

The external aid is not a reliable miderpinning for post-Leninist Ukraine recovery given its limited scope and ineffective use by the borrower. Students of international financial system and its byproduct - the new world of debt - point out that the treatment or rather neglect of financial needs of post-Leninist countries is comparable with a failure to tackle the problems related to African debt. Marshall plan for Western Europe after the World War II was in equal measure economic and political undertaking aiming at putting war torn European economies back on their feet and preventing the threat of communist takeover in France and Italy. "But instead of a Marshal Plan for Eastern Europe, the ex-socialist countries were given the EBRD, a pathetically small, self-serving regional development bank with its potentially helping hands tied behind its back. Instead of the 1990s equivalent of the \$13 billion 1940s dollars - probably about \$ 130 billion - the EBRD ended up merely with some \$3.4 billion to lend or guarantee. . . . Instead of a flexible system of counterpart funds that could be used for public infrastructure like roads, bridges and ports, or to finance industrial re-equipment of municipal housing, the EBRD was bound, under orders from the United States, to dedicate 60 per cent of its loans to private sector... Here was a development bank pretending that what was needed was a profit-making merchant bank" [33].

As far as domestic developments are concerned the state could perform the function of the instigator of radical changes as it was in case of Asian tigers. To attain such a goal the state must be a developmental one. Ukrainian state does not possess the features and capacity of system building regime with its effective ability to penetrate the society - during Brezhnev period of Leninist regime the party's rule was weakened by the encroachments of the traditionalist framework of interest

accommodation further undermined by the deconstruction of party-state and its replacement by the neopatrimonial polity of the soft authoritarian bent. If the society is a scavenger one, the state actors are also likely to succumb to the influence of rampant corruption. Under these conditions developmental state is possible only when it employs the extensive use of violence and is prepared to achieve its developmental task at high human cost (Chile may serve as a classical example) or in its more "civilized" version the institutions of developmental state in general and its executive branch in particular ought to be restricted in their actions by publics acting through elaborated institutions of political society.

One might ask what are the causes and potential explanations of incumbent regime stability and conspicuous absence of civil unrest and large scale violence given that population at large is showing no trust in state institutions while exhibiting increasing dissatisfaction with catastrophically deteriorating life standards. This problem resembles the puzzle of the Soviet regime stability so vigorously discussed by Sovietologists not so long ago. The most plausible answer has been suggested by Ken Jowitt: "The Soviet Union lasted as long as it did, because it disciplined (often through terror) most, rewarded many, and attracted a strategically loyal few for at least fifty of those seventy-four years. Being for a certain period totalitarian, and always dictatorial did not prevent the Soviet party from being what is now fashionably referred to as socially "embedded" [34]. Employing the analogous style of reasoning we may arrive at the following conclusion - first of all even elites in "precarious position do not have to seek support from everyone" [35]. Relative stability of Ukrainian political arrangement lies in a fact that the state has let majority of population struggle for survival by its own means (within the frameworks of virtual and shadow economies), has given many an opportunity for self-expression and possibilities for political and/or economic mobility and in a manner strikingly akin to its Soviet predecessor has attracted strategically important few. Stability, based upon such grounds, cannot hope for having longevity

of the Soviet Union but it may well become a long term pattern of the "development" given the experience of numerous African and Latin American countries.

Perhaps it is more realistic, instead of placing great expectations upon the outcomes of Ukraine's "transition" to think of the transformation of Ukrainian society in terms of Tilly's big structures and long processes which take considerable amount of time - decades and hundreds of years - to complete their cycle. In this respect the most salient lesson of the failure of Leninist regimes is that even decisive breakthrough with a traditionalist past of national dependency and "lagging behind" does not have lasting effect and cannot substitute for painful, slow and non-linear developments towards modernity and postmodernity which Western societies have gone through.

If Ukraine is to make a bid for becoming truly modern society, it has no alternative but to seek linking itself with a capitalist world system as its periphery. It is uncertain if this project is likely to succeed given its unpleasant long term economic, social, political, and more importantly psychological consequences for the majority of population. It is naive to assess Ukrainian ruling establishment ideological orientations by discussing its rhetoric of marketization, democratization and Europeanization while blaming it for the lack of political will to implement these misperceived ideological constructions. Transitologists seem to forget the basic premises of social science that asserts "not ideas, but material and ideal interests, directly govern men's conduct" [36] and continue demanding the ruling political-administrative class pull itself out of the mud of policy incoherence, incompetence and corruption and push through reforms that will undermine its privileged position. From this point of view Ukraine's future is quite certain - it is a future of a dependent periphery; the open question remains whether the dominant center will be the capitalist core or Russia. But the history is open to alternatives - popular participation and resistance does make a difference. As Charles Tilly has suggested drawing upon his own historical account of collective action "when people resisted

vigorously, authorities made concessions: guarantees of rights, representative institutions, courts of appeal" [37].

Perhaps the most telling sign that Ukraine has found itself in a stalemate as far as "transition" tasks are concerned is that even such enormously active promoter of open/civil society in post-Leninist countries as financier George Soros is reported to have "given up on Ukraine" because it "lacks political will and any kind of leadership" of their history soon.

[38]. The Ukraine's dilemma as a whole - between the desire inspired by universal liberal capitalism to design market democracy and the particular constellation of factors jeopardizing the integrity of social order and threatening to turn current decay into the stable pattern of systemic degeneration - is too far complex, at least for me to solve. The only thing is obvious - Ukrainians are not going to witness the liberal-capitalist "end" of their history soon.

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ДЕМОКРАТИЧНИЙ ДИЗАЙН КАПІТАЛІЗМУ В ПОСТЛЕНІНСЬКІЙ УКРАЇНІ: НЕВДАЧА ЛІБЕРАЛЬНОГО ПРОЕКТУ ТРАНСФОРМАЦІЇ?

У статті автор прагне проаналізувати констеляцію внутрішніх і міжнародних факторів, що завели зусилля з трансформації українського суспільства у глухий кут і призвели до результату, який має руйнівний вплив на всі суспільні сфери та групи населення. Досліджується також обґрунтованість основних припущень "транзитології" і робиться спроба оцінити їх релевантність до аналізу соціально-політичних реалій постленінської України. Запропонована дослідницька стратегія є намаганням поєднати світ-системну перспективу із підходом, що надає центральної ваги державі, з класичною соціальною та політичною теорією задля аналізу постленінської суспільно-політичної трансформації.